

HOUSEKEEPING FOR TWO

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THE summer and autumn, with their abundance of fresh fruit and vegetables, have gone. Our winter vegetables are likely to be slighted and somewhat despised if we have been so unfortunate as to eat them only when they have been poorly cooked. They are valuable, like our green vegetables, for their salts, they are inexpensive, they give a variety which is better than a succession of canned vegetables, and, last but not least, they are good when carefully cooked.

Let us begin with carrots. Two medium-sized ones will be enough for two people. Be sure that they are firm and crisp. Withered root vegetables are no more desirable than wilted green vegetables. Wash and scrape the carrots, cut them in half-inch cubes, put them in a saucepan and cover with boiling water. Let them boil steadily until very tender, adding more boiling water if necessary. Add one-quarter teaspoon salt about five minutes before they are done, and allow all the water to evaporate. Carrots should never be drained, as the flavor is mild and too much of it is lost if the water is poured off. Sugar from the carrots and valuable mineral matter are also lost if the liquor is thrown away. Make a half-cup of white sauce, nicely seasoned, add the carrots, let them heat without boiling five minutes, and they are ready to serve. And there is a world of difference between these and carrots cut in large pieces, drained from the liquor in which they are cooked and served with a little lukewarm milk thickened with flour paste. The last are enough to prejudice one against the whole race of winter vegetables.

Salads also become more of a problem when the fresh vegetables are gone, but it is a problem worth solving. More salads and less meat and pastry would improve many a table. Here is one winter salad, appetizing and easily prepared:

Apple and Celery Salad. One cup diced tart apple, one-half cup celery cut in half-inch pieces. Mix with mayonnaise dressing or with the following cooked dressing: One teaspoon mustard, one teaspoon salt, one teaspoon sugar, few grains cayenne, yolks of two eggs, one-third cup hot vinegar, whites of two eggs. Beat yolks of eggs slightly, add dry

ingredients, then stir vinegar in gradually. Cook over hot water, stirring constantly, until mixture thickens. Cool, and fold in whites of eggs beaten until stiff. One-half cup of whipped cream may be used in place of egg whites to make a richer dressing. Chopped walnuts or pecan meats may be added to the apples and celery.

Clear Tomato Soup. One pint canned tomatoes, one cup water, slice of onion, one-half teaspoon salt, one-eighth teaspoon paprika or few grains cayenne, sprig of parsley, two teaspoons cornstarch. Cook tomatoes, water, onion, parsley and seasonings together fifteen minutes, and strain. Mix the cornstarch to a thin paste with cold water and stir it into the strained liquor. Cook, stirring until it boils, and continue boiling until soup is a clear red color, showing that the cornstarch is thoroughly cooked. See that the soup is well seasoned before serving. If you have them, a clove, a peppercorn and a bit of bay leaf cooked with the tomatoes will improve the flavor of this soup.

Eggs have so often to take the place of meat in the small household that a new way of serving them never comes amiss, especially if it be a way that takes off the "eggy taste," as this one does.

Scrambled Eggs with Tomatoes. Three eggs, one-half cup canned tomatoes, one-fourth teaspoon salt, one-eighth teaspoon pepper, two teaspoons butter. Cook tomatoes until pulp is tender enough to mix with juice, add salt, pepper, butter and eggs beaten enough to blend yolks and whites. Cook over a low fire, lifting mixture constantly from bottom of pan, until the eggs are set, but soft and creamy. Pile on slices of crisp toast and serve. A slice of onion finely minced and cooked with the tomatoes gives additional flavor to this dish.

Another hearty dish which may be used as a meat substitute is macaroni and cheese. This is less expensive than eggs at this time of year. Break six or eight sticks of macaroni into three-quarter inch pieces. Drop the pieces into a pint of actively boiling salted water in the top of the double boiler. Boil twenty minutes, lifting pieces with a fork occasionally to prevent sticking. Then set over lower boiler half filled with boiling water and continue cooking forty minutes. Turn into a strainer and let cold water run through it freely. Macaroni cooked in this way is nearly as tender as white of egg and more digestible and palatable than that which has been cooked directly over the flame for a shorter time. Make a half-cup of white sauce and add to it one-quarter cup of grated or thinly shaved cheese. Stir until the cheese is thoroughly mixed with the sauce. Add the cooked macaroni and reheat, but do not boil it.

Macaroni and cheese often disagrees with people and is considered

indigestible. And so it is if the macaroni is half-cooked and the cheese is over-cooked, as it commonly is. It is no better to cook cheese at a high temperature than to treat eggs in that way, and when we put macaroni and cheese in the oven and give the cheese a crisp, brown coating we are making it about as digestible as a piece of leather. If you must have your macaroni and cheese browned on top, put the macaroni and sauce in a baking dish, scatter a few very lightly buttered bread crumbs over the top and set it under the gas broiler flame for two or three minutes, until the crumbs are browned, and you have as pretty a dish as you need ask. This browning can be done in the oven, but it is difficult to do it there without getting the cheese too hot.

When you do not care for so nutritious a dish as the macaroni and cheese, use a half-cup of tomato sauce with the macaroni instead of the white sauce and cheese.

If you make tomato soup, macaroni with tomato sauce and eggs scrambled with tomatoes, within a few days, you will very nearly use up your can of tomatoes. If you still have a cupful left, you can heat them and thicken them with a tablespoon of butter and a tablespoon of flour cooked together and season them with salt and pepper. Or, stir into them a half-cup of stale bread crumbs, season with salt, pepper and butter and let them cook until they are thoroughly heated and the crumbs have absorbed the juice.

Steamed Graham Pudding. Two tablespoons butter, one-quarter cup molasses, one-quarter cup milk, one small egg, three-quarters cup graham flour, one-quarter teaspoon soda, one-half teaspoon salt, one-half cup dates cut in small pieces, or one-half cup seeded raisins. Mix and sift dry ingredients, add fruit, molasses, milk, egg well beaten, and, finally, butter melted. Turn into well-greased individual moulds, stand in a kettle of boiling water, cover closely and boil one hour, without uncovering. Quarter-pound baking powder boxes or cocoa boxes answer perfectly for moulds. Both boxes and covers should be greased, and they should not be more than half or two-thirds full of the pudding mixture. Serve this pudding with the following lemon sauce:

One-half cup sugar, one cup boiling water, one tablespoon flour, one tablespoon butter, one and a half tablespoons lemon juice, yolk of one egg. Mix flour and sugar, add water gradually, stirring constantly. Boil five minutes. Stir mixture into beaten yolk of egg, cook without boiling two minutes. Remove from fire, beat in butter and lemon juice.

Here is a suggestion for the Christmas dinner menu, if the family of two does not join some outside household for the day. Clear tomato soup, roast chicken, mashed potato or baked sweet potato, celery and apple salad, steamed graham pudding.